



## KANGA, MANECK FARDOONJI

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**KANGA, MANECK FARDOONJI**, Parsi scholar of Zoroastrianism and Iranian languages (b. Navsari, 21 January 1908; d. Bombay, 17 October 1988; [Figure 1](#)). He received his early education at the D. K. Tata Anglo-Vernacular School and matriculated from the Sir Cawasji Jehangir Madressa High School, in Navsari, Gujarat, India. He was ordained as a Zoroastrian priest (Guj. *nāwar*) in Navsari, a town well known as a center of Zoroastrian learning, especially for priestly training and traditions. Priestly training required him to memorize the seventy-two chapters of the *Yasna*, under tutelage of his father Fardoonji, who was an active *mobed*. He obtained Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Arts from St. Xavier's College, Bombay, while studying the Avestan and Pahlavi languages and texts at the Sir J. J. Zarthoshti Madressa in the same city. He was awarded the Sir Dinshaw Petit University scholarship and the Firozeshah Mehrwanji Jejeebhoy Avesta Pahlavi Scholarship in 1931. After completing his studies in 1934, Kanga worked as a Custom's appraisal and excise officer with the Government of India before retiring in 1964 as Chief Appraiser, while continuing his research in Avestan and Pahlavi as a scholar priest (Guj. *ērvad*). Married, he had one daughter.

Kanga was a Fellow in English of St. Xavier's College and a Fellow in Avesta Pahlavi of Sir J.J. Zarthoshti Madressa. As Secretary of the Gatha Society, Kanga organized lectures and published literature on Iranian studies. *ērvad* Kanga also served as President of the Iranian Studies Section of the All India Oriental Conference for four terms. He held the position of Secretary of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay for 15 years and edited that Institute's journal. He



served as Professor of Avestan Studies at the University of Bombay and was the examiner for both graduate and post-graduate studies. Kanga was also a member of the board of Ancient Studies at the University of Allahabad and a member of the Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala (Vedic Research Institute) at Pune, where he succeeded Dr. Irach J. S. Taraporewala as its director.

In 1954 he was invited to speak by the University of Cambridge at the 22nd International Congress of Orientalists. Later, in recognition of his scholarship, he was deputed as the Indian delegate at the Shiraz Congress on Iranology in 1971 to mark what was proclaimed as the 2500th anniversary of the “Founding of the Persian Empire” (marked from the death in late 530 BCE of the Achaemenid King Cyrus II the Great [see CYRUS iii]). Moreover, he was appointed an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society (London), Société d’Iranologie (Tehran), Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum (London), and the American Oriental Society (U.S.A.) in recognition to his contributions in the field of Iranian studies. He was a visiting Professor of Iranian Studies at the universities of Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, and Shiraz and a delegate at the 16th Deutscher Orientalistentag at the University of Heidelberg (Mama, 2009).

#### WORKS

In 1941 Kanga published an English translation of the *Pahlavi Version of the Yašts*. Four years later, he presented a paper at the 12th All India Oriental Conference at Banaras Hindu University on “The Pahlavi Version of Yasna I” (*Jam-e Jamshed Newspaper*, 18 January 1944) that was published in 1945. At the 14th All India Oriental Conference, in 1948, he read a paper on the “Interpretation of some Avestan and Pahlavi Words and Glosses.” At the 15th All India Oriental Conference in Bombay during 1949 he read a paper on the “Dātistān i Dēnik – Puršišn XL,” which was published ten years later. In 1953, Kanga produced a transliteration and translation of the *Pahlavi Yasna*, chapters IX-XVI, with a complete concordance of words in the Pahlavi text with their Avestan original. His main aim was to determine how representative the Pahlavi translation was as a correct interpretation of the Avestan text in view of advancements made in modern philological research. Kanga based his transcription on the *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad* edited by Bamanji N. Dhabhar (1949) and consulted Friedrich von Spiegel’s (q.v.) studies of the *Pahlavi Yasna* as well. Kanga’s edition and translation of *Čītak handarz ī pōryōtkēšān* (see ČĪDAG ANDARZ Ī PŌRYŌTKĒŠĀN) was published in 1960 with a forward by Sir Harold Bailey (q.v.). He also published a Devanagari edition of the Avesta in 3 volumes (1962, 1965). His *Avesta Reader* (1988) was released by then President



of India Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma at the Diamond Jubilee of the Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala, which had facilitated his research.

Kanga's vast knowledge of Avestan and Pahlavi enabled him to edit, translate, and comment upon a range of Pahlavi texts, including chapters of the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* (q.v.) and the *Nāmagīhā ī Manuščīhr ī Gōšnjamān* (*jūwānjāmān*), the Epistles of Manuščīhr. In his 1958 article on the Second Epistle of Manuščīhr, Kanga concurred with E. W. West's observation (West, p. xix) that the writings of Manuščīhr and his brother Zādspram are the most difficult Pahlavi texts to translate, together with *Dēnkard* III. As for the *Dēnkard*, Kanga paid tribute to its comprehensive coverage of the Mazda-worshipping religion in his 1964 article on the *Pursišnīhā ī Boxt-mārā*.

At the request of the Bombay Parsi Punchayat, Kanga translated Avesta scriptures into English from the Gujarati versions done by the nineteenth-century scholar-priest Kawasji Edulji Kanga. These were published posthumously: the *Khordeh Avesta* (1993), the *Gāthās* (1997), and selected *Yašts* (2001). Those three books are still utilized by Zoroastrians to recite prayers and to gain an understanding of them.

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